

NCA
VOC FOR PGM/FN
BACKGROUNDER NO. 5-5842
JOHN GUERRINI/UNITED NATIONS

MAY 22, 1978

SPECIAL SESSION ON DISARMAMENT

ANNCR:

ON TUESDAY (23 MAY) IN NEW YORK, THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY OPENS A SPECIAL FIVE-WEEK SESSION (THROUGH 28 JUNE) DEVOTED ENTIRELY TO THE QUESTION OF DISARMAMENT. OUR U-N CORRESPONDENT, JOHN GUERRINI, HAS THIS BACKGROUND REPORT.

VOICE:

IT'S HARD TO FIND A COUNTRY THAT OPPOSES DISARMAMENT. BUT IT'S NO EASIER TO FIND ONE THAT PRACTICES IT. THE BEST INTENTIONS IN THE WORLD MOST OFTEN GIVE WAY TO THE FIRST IMPERATIVE OF THE MODERN STATE: NATIONAL SECURITY.

SO, FUELED BY THE INEXORABLE ADVANCE OF TECHNOLOGY, THE ARMS RACE SPIRALS ON--TO THE POINT WHERE THE WORLD SPENDS MORE THAN ONE THOUSAND MILLION DOLLARS EVERYDAY ON WEAPONS OF DESTRUCTION.

TO THE GREAT MASS OF HUMANITY GOING TO BED HUNGRY IN RAMSHACKLE HOUSING IT SEEMS A SHAMEFUL MISUSE OF THE EARTH'S RESOURCES. THE POORER COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD--THE MAJORITY OF THE U-N'S ONE-HUNDRED-FORTY-NINE MEMBERS-- WOULD LIKE TO SEE THAT WEALTH CHANNELLED INTO DEVELOPMENT. IT WAS TO UNDERLINE THIS POINT THAT THEY PUSHED FOR THIS SPECIAL SESSION ON DISARMAMENT.

THE FIVE-WEEK SESSION IS NOT A NEGOTIATING FORUM AND IS NOT MEANT PRODUCE DISARMAMENT AGREEMENTS. THE MAN WHO GUIDED THE WORK OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE, CARLOS ORTIZ DE ROZAS, CAUTIONS AGAINST EXPECTING SPECTACULAR RESULTS. THE MOST

THAT CAN BE LOOKED FOR, HE SAYS, IS FOR THE SESSION TO LAY DOWN THE GUIDELINES FOR FUTURE DISARMAMENT NEGOTIATIONS AND TO GIVE THEM A NEW IMPETUS.

MUCH OF THE BOOST IS EXPECTED TO COME FROM THE PRESENCE OF AT LEAST NINETEEN HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT, AMONG THEM PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING OF FRANCE, PRIME MINISTER SCHMIDT OF WEST GERMANY, PRIME MINISTER DESAI OF INDIA AND PRESIDENT SENGHOR OF SENEGAL. PRESIDENT CARTER, WHO HAS ALREADY MADE A MAJOR SPEECH ON DISARMAMENT HERE, IS SENDING VICE-PRESIDENT MONDALE TO DELIVER THE U-S STATEMENT ON THE OPENING DAY OF THE GENERAL DEBATE (WEDNESDAY). SECRETARY-OF-STATE VANCE WILL ALSO SPEND A NUMBER OF DAYS HERE IN TALKS WITH FOREIGN MINISTERS, INCLUDING ANDREI GROMYKO OF THE SOVIET UNION.

THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION WILL COME IN FOR A GOOD DEAL OF ATTENTION IN THE COURSE OF THE SESSION AS THE TWO LEADING NUCLEAR POWERS AND PRODUCERS OF ARMS. IT'S EXPECTED THEY'LL BE PRESSED TO REACH AGREEMENT QUICKLY ON NEW STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATION ACCORD AND A TREATY BANNING CHEMICAL WEAPONS. AGREEMENT IS REPORTED NEAR ON BOTH ISSUES--AS WELL AS ON A COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR TEST BAN TREATY JOINED IN BY BRITAIN--BUT THE PAINSTAKING NEGOTIATIONS GO ON--AND NO AGREEMENT IS EXPECTED TO BE ANNOUNCED IN THE COURSE OF THIS SESSION.

THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION ARE ALSO EXPECTING TO BE CHALLENGED ON THEIR CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE COMMITTEE ON DISARMAMENT, WHICH HAS BEEN MEETING FOR YEARS IN GENEVA. FRANCE HAS INDICATED A WILLINGNESS TO JOIN THE NEGOTIATIONS IF THE GROUNDRULES ARE CHANGED, AND IT HAS

DRAWN UP A MAJOR PROPOSAL FOR SATELLITE VERIFICATION OF DISARMAMENT AGREEMENTS. U-S DIPLOMATS WELCOME FRANCE'S READINESS TO JOIN DISARMAMENT TALKS BUT THEY DON'T EXPECT THAT THE OTHER NUCLEAR POWER, CHINA, WILL DROP ITS BOYCOTT OF ALL ARMS NEGOTIATIONS.

(OPT) IN THE COURSE OF THE SESSION, MANY ISSUES WILL BE TOUCHED ON WHICH AFFECT NOT JUST THE MAJOR POWERS--BUT ALL COUNTRIES--LIKE NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION, ARMS TRANSFERS AND REGIONAL AGREEMENTS, LIKE NUCLEAR-FREE ZONES. (END OPT)

THE SPECIAL SESSION DISARMAMENT WILL ADOPT TWO DOCUMENTS: A DECLARATION AND A PLAN OF ACTION. EVERY EFFORT WILL BE MADE TO HAVE THEM ADOPTED BY CONSENSUS. DIPLOMATS HERE ARE HOPING IN THIS WAY TO CREATE THE ATMOSPHERE OF TRUST THAT IS THE PRECONDITION TO ANY STEPS ON THE ARDUOUS ROAD TO TRUE DISARMAMENT.

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JS/RTD